



## NAMIBIA

### MCC Learning from

### **“FINAL REPORT OF THE NAMIBIA TOURISM MARKETING EVALUATION”**

**ABT ASSOCIATES, SEPTEMBER 2020**

MCC has identified the following programmatic and evaluation lessons based on the Namibia Tourism Marketing Final Evaluation Report.

#### PROGRAMMATIC LESSONS

- *Consider whether the implementation timeline will enable a foundation for success.* The evaluation report notes that the regional tourism routes supported under the Compact were rushed to completion, and lacked time needed to support the intensive process of gaining buy-in from stakeholders along the routes and laying the foundation for continued support post-Compact. MCC was aware the implementation timeline would be rushed but opted to proceed anyway; it is also possible MCC simply underestimated how difficult the process of actually operationalizing these routes would be. While MCC is often overly optimistic about implementation timelines and it is very difficult to get partner countries to agree to reduce the scope of a program once it is underway, racing toward the finish line does not generally position MCC investments for success. Therefore, in addition to better understanding the various conditions necessary to implement a program and achieve success, MCC must be more willing to hold firm against partner country wishes and discontinue funding for certain activities if it is unlikely implementation can be completed on time or implemented in a manner that allows the achievement of desired results.
- *Political economy analysis (PEA) and/or Problem Driven Iterative Adaptation (PDIA) approaches to investments may be necessary to clarify existing capacity in the sector and inform a strategy to build the capacity needed to sustain desired changes.* The evaluation report noted that the Tourism Marketing Activity brought considerable exposure to Namibia in the North American market but some of the components may have suffered from unrealistic expectations about the financial capacity of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) and the Namibia Tourism Board (NTB) (i.e., the official travel and hospitality governing body of Namibia) to capitalize on the these efforts once the Compact ended. If the Compact interventions attempted to initiate a process that MET and NTB would continue, there should have been more focus on the capacity of both entities

to implement these efforts and sustain them post-compact. Two tools that MCC is using in more recent compacts under development and implementation are: (i) PEA, which helps stakeholders understand how change happens within a particular context and (ii) PDIA, which empowers local stakeholders to solve difficult policy problems through iterative and adaptive activities. Both should have revealed the level of existing capacity within the two organizations and suggested entry points for capacity-building, aligning incentives to achieve the results targeted by the Compact, and securing desired changes in practice, thereby increasing the potential for sustainability.

- *MCC should consider why information systems and technology supported in its compacts frequently encounter sustainability challenges and approach these investments differently.* According to the evaluation report, the interactive website developed for NTB was costly. In fact, hosting and maintenance were considered so costly post-Compact, NTB closed down the website about one year after the Compact ended and replaced it with similar but cheaper, locally-hosted site. The following considerations may have prevented this outcome. First, to the extent the website did not meet the perceived needs of the Namibians, co-creating the site might have better aligned it with their needs and capacity, and increased their buy-in for its development and use. Second, to address the inability to maintain the compact-funded site, perhaps MCC could have (1) ensured the site was fit for purpose and included no more sophistication than truly necessary; (2) included in procurement documents that the site must be maintained with equipment and expertise that is locally or regionally available; and (3) considered whether to require that Namibia begin budgeting for system maintenance during implementation rather than waiting until the Compact ended. Finally, the lack of adoption or sustainability could also reflect a lack of political will or prioritization. In the future, MCC should explore the incentives for an Implementing Entity to embrace and maintain information systems as a part of any political economy analysis and aim to incentivize the adoption and use of these systems for improved operations; specific solutions should be tailored to the context but might include providing additional resources to entities that demonstrate their commitment to competent data use.